

The Fair Havens

A Time to Help

In the 25th chapter of Matthew, we are given an account of the saints before the Judgment Seat of Christ. The faithful saints' acceptance was based upon how they treated their brethren in need. Whether hungry, thirsty, homeless, naked, ill or imprisoned, the true disciple responded. Indeed, these believers were seemingly unaware of their good works. It was as if they arose automatically, without conscious thought. This was the natural response of a life redeemed, and a mind and heart converted. These gestures of a living faith in the Son of God were seen by Jesus as tokens that had been bestowed on Him personally. "Verily I say unto you, Inasmuch as ye have done it unto one of the least of these my brethren, ye have done it unto me." (vs.40)

Sadly, the converse was also true. The saints who chose to ignore the needs of their brethren and look the other way, or "pass by on the other side" (Lk. 10: 31, 32) were rejected because they failed to realize that their care and compassion towards their brethren, by extension, were an expression of their love and commitment to their Master. "Verily I say unto you, Inasmuch as ye did it not to one of the least of these, ye did it not to me." (vs.45)

As the Gospel continues to be preached around the globe, the needs in the body of Christ continue to grow. These provide those of us in Canada, who have been so richly blessed, opportunity to demonstrate our love to our Lord who bought us. Avenues are readily open to support the work of the Bible Missions, and other Christadelphian foundations such as WCF. More recently, as the Truth has spread to Moslem countries, new brothers and sisters have faced mounting religious persecution and many have fled in fear of their lives. Today Christadelphian refugees who have lost "houses, family or lands for Christ's sake" are seeking resettlement in a safe haven.

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Included in this issue of The Fair Havens:

- An exhortation by Bro. Len Richardson on the *"Ordinary Believer in the First Century and Today"*
- The Foundation's Terms of Reference
- Practical advice on Community Sponsorship of refugee brethren



Canada remains one of the last refuges for these brethren. Since 9/11, the American resettlement of refugees from Iran has been greatly curtailed. Other western countries have shown little inclination to accept such people. Canada, however, has a more open immigration policy, especially if the refugee is sponsored by a group in Canada. In this issue of the Fair Havens, we will present the benefits and practical considerations of sponsorship. An ecclesial project of resettling a Christadelphian refugee can provide a positive opportunity to work together, to put our faith into action, and to afford a brother or sister the chance to begin life again without fear of persecution. Everyone involved can benefit.

One Iranian Christadelphian brother, currently in Turkey and seeking asylum in the west, wrote of one of his friends who had been sponsored by the Jesuits in Winnipeg. Other denominations have recognized the need and have responded with compassion. Will we walk by on the other side?

Think on These Things

The Life of an Ordinary Believer in the First Century and Today--Abridged

Although we may not discount the possibility that many Christian members of the various congregations took part in preaching and other more public aspects of the work, it is clear from the exhortations addressed to the first century believers in the apostolic epistles that it was primarily to their manner of life that they were to look for the 'witness' to the world. Two words which continually recur in these admonitions are "walk" and "conversation", which may be taken to mean their daily conduct, and their way of life (perhaps particularly in their social contacts). The emphasis all the time is on positive Christian behaviour--setting an example to their non-Christian neighbours by good living and good deeds. We may take Paul's 1st letter to the Thessalonians as just one example. We notice first of all that it is addressed to the whole Church, and not to specific individuals, or to the leaders, i.e. the bishops and deacons, as at Philippi. In verse 3 he commends them for the three great qualities of faith, hope and love, which we find continually cropping up in his letters, and which characterized their community

life. They were examples (v.7) of what Christian living is all about, and were well-known everywhere for their living faith. How important this is today, as then. We should be "examples" of the faith we preach, and men are entitled to judge what we say in the light of how we behave. "By their fruits ye shall know them" is the dictum of our Lord, and it applies to us as well as others. This is the daily witness to the Truth in the lives of all members--the ordinary walk and conduct by which the humblest brother and sister can testify to Christ living in them.

A year or two ago I was asked to give a talk to the local Mother's Union attached to the village Church. When it was over, a lady came to speak to me (she had been the village headmistress) and asked me if I knew "Bessie Smith", now apparently dead and not known to me at all. "As soon as you mentioned Christadelphians," the lady said, "I thought of Bessie Smith. She was a Christadelphian, and a wonderful woman. If anybody in the village was in trouble, they always went to Bessie...etc. etc." How proud I was, and how pleased to know that she had done her job so well. Say "Christadelphian" and they say "Bessie Smith". Say "Bessie Smith" and they tell, like Dorcas, of the "good works and almsdeeds which she did." (Acts 9:36)

This is the true witness of the Church in the lives of its "ordinary members"--its unsung heroes.

Life in Christ is more than "holding office" (or, worse still, "seeking office") in the Ecclesia. It does not demand prominence in the community, though of course it does not prohibit it either. In a sense this is irrelevant. It is much more than sudden and occasional bursts of spectacular activity. It is "the daily round, the common task", which provides the arena for true Christian living. It is in the development of the really important qualities of faith , and hope, and charity (or love if you prefer it) that our truest witness lies. Not trying, indeed, to earn salvation by good works, but rather to show our gratitude for salvation in loving humble service to all in Christ's name. And in these things the humblest members may excel.

Bro. Len Richardson *Biblical Browsings for Believers*,
1996

An Interview with Alex

In November the Toronto West Ecclesia hosted a Sunday afternoon interview with Bro. Alex, in order that their members might be more familiar with the journey that brought this young Christadelphian Iranian refugee to their ecclesia.

Alex was raised a Moslem, in a religious and influential household. At age 23, his interest in religion and philosophy led to discussions that caused him to question the very foundations of his beliefs. He concluded that the tenets of Islam that he had earlier embraced were not true, and disillusionment followed. Alex became what he described as an atheist, but an unmet need remained. Three years later he began researching different religions, looking for the Divine Creator, for he saw in nature a living testament to the hand of a Designer.

His search brought him to Bro. Hamid, a similarly earnest Bible student in Tehran who had already learned the Truth. By Alex's own admission he was a 'hard sell', having previously been deceived by the teachings of the Koran. But his resistance disappeared as he began to realize that the doctrines of the Bible were not lies, but attested to the God of Creation.

Alex reported that being baptised presented some logistical problems. This had to be done indoors, for fear of the authorities. And so a rather large bathtub was borrowed from neighbours on the pretext that there were expensive fish that needed to be saved. Little did the neighbour appreciate that Alex was one of those fish!

The new ecclesia in Tehran continued to meet together and break bread over the next several months; but when one of the brethren mysteriously disappeared, it was feared that he had been caught and tortured by the police. In Iran it is a capital offence for a Moslem to convert to Christianity. Because of the likelihood that this brother would implicate the others if tortured, it was decided to flee to Turkey. Alex described life in Iran under the iron fist of the religious leaders. Not only had the country stumbled economically, but paramilitary groups acting with the regime's tacit approval terrorized students and other groups that sought to challenge the authority of the Ayatollahs.

Alex and the other brothers and sisters entered Turkey by bus at a nondescript boarding crossing where their credentials could not be readily cross checked. In the two years that followed, the group obtained UNHCR refugee status and awaited resettlement. Convincing UNHCR in Turkey that they were bona fide religious refugees was itself a tremendous challenge, particularly because the interviewers were all Moslem and had no sympathy for converts! Life as a refugee in Turkey was not without difficulty. Alex was forbidden to work, and the months dragged on until his processing by Citizenship and Immigration Canada was complete.

When asked what he liked best about life in Canada, he responded that it was his new ecclesial family at Toronto East. And heading the list of dislikes was the western materialistic lifestyle that enslaved people to want more and more. When asked if another revolution were to make it safe to return to Iran, would he want to go home, he replied, "YES!"

We realize that there will be no lasting peace until our Lord returns. In that millennial age mankind will benefit from the righteous rule of Christ and the saints. "They shall sit every man under his vine and under his fig tree: and none shall make them afraid." Micah 4:4



Bro. Alex is a member of the Toronto East Ecclesia.

The Community Sponsor Program

As refugee brothers and sisters flee their homelands because of their faith, the need will continue for safe asylum. Resettlement in Canada is possible through a Citizenship and Immigration Canada (CIC) program called Community Sponsorship. A community group may be an organization or association. The federal government has relaxed the requirements so that it is no longer necessary to be incorporated. An ecclesia would be considered such a 'group'.

In order to be considered as a sponsor, the ecclesia would need to meet the following three requirements:

1. They would need to demonstrate the financial ability to fulfill the sponsorship undertaking for the duration of the 12-month sponsorship period.
2. They would need available human resources to provide emotional and spiritual support to the refugee and their family.
3. The ecclesia should be located in the community where the refugee(s) are expected to live.

What are the responsibilities of the sponsoring group?

Sponsoring groups must agree to support the sponsored refugees by meeting their resettlement needs for one year. Some examples are:

- providing for the cost of food, rent and telephone installation, and other everyday living expenses
- providing clothing, furniture and other household goods
- selecting a family physician
- applying for health care coverage
- enrolling children in schools or adults in language training
- assisting refugees to integrate into ecclesial life in Canada
- providing orientation with regard to banking services, transportation, etc.
- helping the refugee find employment when appropriate.

How does a sponsoring group determine how much financial support will be required?

In order to help determine what financial requirements may be necessary to support the refugee applicant, CIC publishes a sponsorship cost table in the application form. This will vary depending upon the cost of living in different parts of the country. To more accurately assess the costs involved the sponsor should consider :

Rent: Accommodation costs are probably the largest expense. The rent should be affordable for the refugee after the sponsorship ends.

Utilities including electricity, heat and water.

Food: Consider the refugees need to have some of their national food in their diet.

Transportation such as a monthly metro pass, or bus tickets.

Telephone and phone cards.

Health costs not covered by the provincial health plan or the Interim Federal Health Plan.

Education including school trips, day care to allow parents to attend language training, transition into the work force.

Incidentals: pocket money, recreation, unanticipated expenses.

Start up costs, such as furnishing the apartment, food staples, winter clothes, and the like can be provided 'in kind'. The Toronto ecclesiastas were able to furnish the accommodations almost exclusively with donated goods from local brothers and sisters. This in turn reduces the actual cost of the sponsorship.

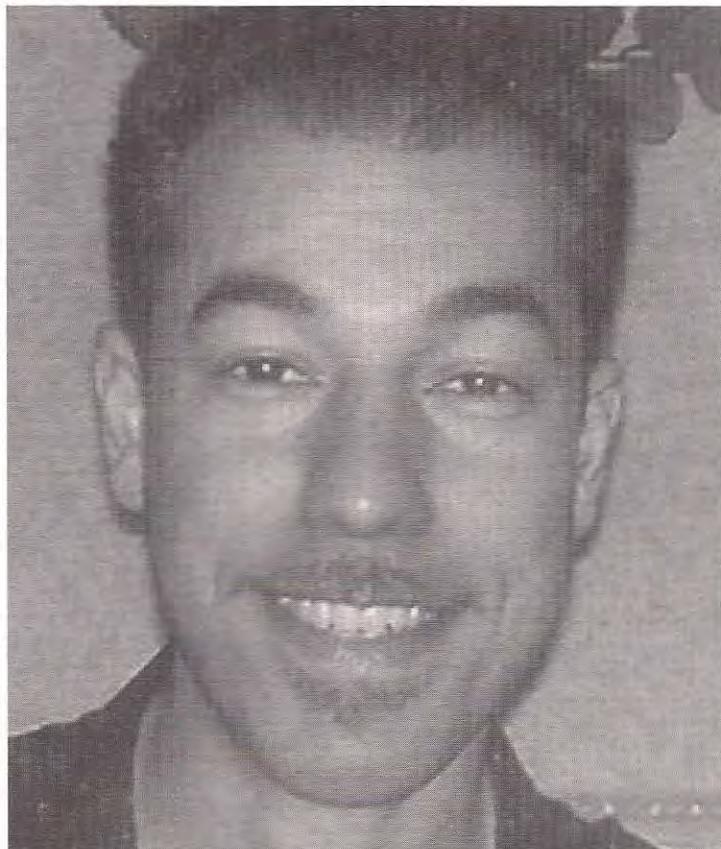
The application for community sponsorship contains several sections. These include:

- an organization profile, with a request for a financial statement
- a sponsor assessment
- a settlement needs checklist to assist the sponsor in ensuring that responsibilities have been covered off and
- a more detailed settlement plan. This insures the sponsoring applicant has considered: availability and cost of rental accommodation, which volunteers will be available to assist the refugee(s) during their resettlement, and contingency plans should problems arise during the course of the year.

The application is available from the CIC web site, www.cic.gc.ca, or by phoning the call centre at 1-888-242-2100.

Once the application is received by CIC, an acknowledgement is sent; the refugee then completes and sends his form to the local visa office. After screening, an interview and a medical, the refugee applicant then awaits arrangements for travel to Canada.

This is coordinated through the International Organization for Migration. Although it may sound streamlined, the process can take the better part of two years or longer.



Bro. Kourosh was the first Christadelphian Iranian refugee brother to arrive in Canada. He is a member of the Mississauga West Ecclesia.

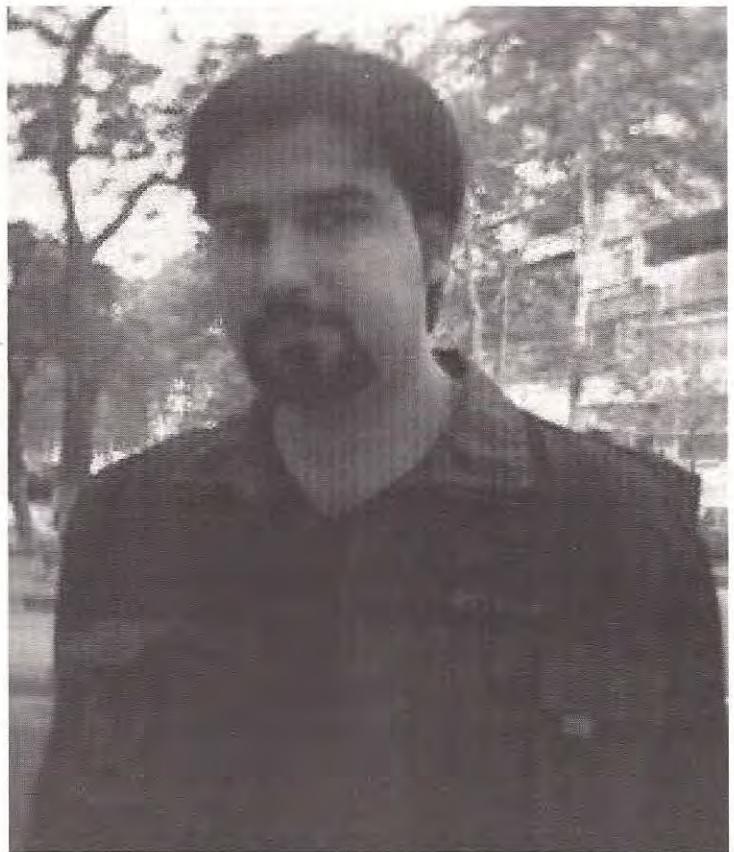
The refugee is responsible for medical exam costs and travel costs to Canada. The government will loan the refugee the cost of travel which is expected to be repaid after one year.

The two ecclesias who are now actively assisting in the resettlement of refugee brethren have both reported very positive experiences. It provides the entire ecclesia an opportunity to demonstrate the love of Christ in a

practical way.

The Fairhaven Christadelphian Charitable Foundation will assist your ecclesia in funding a sponsorship. Upon written request to the Foundation, matching funds will be provided to defray the costs of sponsorship for the first year. Should the refugee not be self sufficient after the initial year in Canada and further ecclesial support is required, a subsequent request can then be made.

Details about brethren in need of ecclesial sponsorship can be obtained from the chairman at ghents@sympatico.ca.



Bro. Nima and his family are currently in Azerbaijan awaiting processing of their application.

The Fair Havens

The Fairhaven Christadelphian
Charitable Foundation
c/o Sister Penny Keeting
Secretary
728 Church Street
Toronto, ON, M4W 2M6

Directors
Bro. Brent Curry
Bro. Clive Daniel, Treasurer
Bro. Alan Ghent, Chair
Sis. Penny Keeting, Secretary
Sis. Marie Klien
Bro. Ian McPhee
Bro. Tom Thorp

Terms of Reference

How can the Fairhaven Christadelphian Charitable Foundation be of assistance to your ecclesia? Are there health and welfare needs in your meeting that require attention, but ecclesial resources are strained or insufficient? The Foundation, operating under the applicable government regulations, may provide grants only to registered charities in Canada. We disperse a percentage of our investment income, based upon a government regulatory formula.

Ecclesiastical bodies in Canada may request assistance from the Foundation by following these guidelines:

Only requests from Arranging Boards will be considered. An individual member of an ecclesia may not make a personal request to the Foundation. Priority is to be given to the welfare needs of Christadelphian elderly, since this reflects the original purpose of Fairhaven House. If additional funds are available after meeting these needs, then more general health and welfare needs of the Christadelphian community will be considered, followed by health and welfare needs of the community at large. Requests must be in writing and should document in confidence the need, the background, the amount of help required and the amount of help being provided by the ecclesia. It is expected that the ecclesia requesting support will also provide funds to assist from its own resources. It is preferable, if possible, that ecclesiastical bodies address emergency situations, and subsequently follow up with a request to the Foundation. The Board of the Foundation considers requests at its semi-annual meetings in March and August each year. Emergency requests will also be addressed as quickly as possible.

Requests may be sent to:

The Fairhaven Christadelphian Foundation
c/o Sister Penny Keeting, Secretary
728 Church Street
Toronto, ON M4W 2M6

It is important to appreciate that the primary responsibility to meet the welfare needs of our brothers, sisters and young people lies at the ecclesial level, and consequently the Foundation's role is to supplement rather than supplant this ecclesial responsibility. We encourage ecclesiastical bodies to be actively aware of situations where there is a need, extend help, and then approach the Foundation as a funding partner.

Year End Financial Report

Statement Of Revenue,
Expenses And Fund Balance
For The Year Ending
March 31, 2004

Revenue

Investment income	20,884
Grants returned	0
	20,884

Expenses

Grants	15,540
Professional fees	1,433
Other	1,218
	18,191

Net Income (Loss) 2,693

Opening fund balance 479,283

Closing fund balance 481,976